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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Northern Ireland Women's European Platform, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

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Statement

The agreement and commitment by Governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, led to the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 12 critical areas of concern — a visionary document with clear, committed and deliverable actions.

Again in 2000, at the review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, additional commitment was undertaken at a global level, including the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). These landmark documents were seen as some of the most positive responses by Governments globally and, if implemented fully, could address gender inequalities and promote the empowerment of women at the local, national and global levels.

Although the internationally agreed development goals and commitments do not have timescales or measured steps to mainstream actions, the women's movement recognizes the reporting accountability of Governments through such mechanisms as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and subsequent reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Unfortunately, since 2000, action has been fragmented; the momentum gained from 1995 to 2000 seems to have faded. Many women have experienced a reversal with regard to their rights; Governments continue to ignore international treaties, conventions and commitments; and, depending where one lives, positive gains have created an imbalance in gender equality and empowerment for women.

Women in Northern Ireland can fully appreciate this irony. Throughout the conflict, most women were the source of stability within communities; yet, following the peace process, resolution 1325 (2000) was not implemented. This has resulted in an imbalance in gender equality in decision-making responsibilities, especially at the political level. This is the issue for many women in or emerging from conflict; there is an urgent need to underpin the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) through Government mainstreaming actions.

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform would like to make the following recommendations, if internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women are to have an impact:

- To reach immediate international agreement on four to five key global issues, with guaranteed impact and strict timescales
- To provide a user-friendly system and resources for non-governmental organizations to monitor and report to the United Nations on the internationally agreed goals
- To set global targets and timescales on delivery of further key issues over the next three years
- To establish and implement stronger sanctions on countries that continue to ignore conventions or treaties relating to gender equality and empowerment of women
- To assist Member States in identifying and creating international measurable steps to ensure mainstreaming of actions

- To move to establish a fully functioning and funded gender entity with the power to monitor, support, recommend and deliver key policies to address gender equality and empowerment of women
- To encourage Member States to commit to another world conference on women, with the total assurance that it would not weaken the Beijing Platform for Action or the Beijing +5 outcome.